United Nations

A/AC.109/2013/18

General Assembly

Distr.: General
24 May 2013

Original: English

Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Dissemination of information on decolonization during the period from April 2012 to March 2013

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 67/133, provides an overview of the activities undertaken by the Department of Public Information to disseminate information on decolonization, with particular emphasis on the options of self-determination available for the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. Unless otherwise mentioned, it covers the period from April 2012 to March 2013.

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I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in paragraph 2 of its resolution 67/133 of 14 January 2013, considered it important to continue and expand its efforts to ensure the widest possible dissemination of information on decolonization, with particular emphasis on the options of self-determination available for the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. To that end, it requested the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat, through the United Nations information centres in the relevant regions, to actively engage and seek new and innovative ways to disseminate material to the Non-Self-Governing Territories. In paragraph 3 of the same resolution, the Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to further enhance the information provided on the United Nations decolonization website and to continue to include the full series of reports of the regional seminars on decolonization, the statements and scholarly papers presented at those seminars and links to the full series of reports on the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. In paragraph 4 of the resolution, the Assembly requested the Department of Public Information to continue its efforts to update web-based information on the assistance programmes available to the Non-Self-Governing Territories. In paragraph 5, the Assembly requested the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Public Information to implement the recommendations of the Special Committee and to continue their efforts to take measures through all media available, including publications, radio and television, as well as the Internet, to give publicity to the work of the United Nations in the field of decolonization.

2. The present report, prepared in response to that mandate, covers the period from April 2012 to March 2013.

II. 2012 Caribbean regional seminar on decolonization, Quito, 30 May-1 June 2012

3. The Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, also known as the Special Committee of 24 on Decolonization, held its 2012 annual regional seminar in Quito, from 30 May to 1 June. The seminar, hosted by the Government of Ecuador, was conducted within the framework of the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism (2011-2020).

4. The Department arranged for the deployment of a press officer from the United Nations Information Centre in Bogota to cover the seminar. The officer provided media support and issued four press releases, which were carried by the Meetings Coverage Section of the Department.

III. Coverage of issues before the General Assembly

Services to the media

5. During the reporting period, the Department press service issued a total of 45 press releases on decolonization in English and French, covering meetings, statements and hearings by various United Nations bodies, including the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Special Political and Decolonization Committee and the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

6. The United Nations News Centre provided regular coverage of the work of the Organization on decolonization in the six official languages, and further distributed its stories through RSS feed, e-mail to some 50,000 subscribers, and Facebook and Twitter accounts in English and French. The Centre's stories on these issues were picked up by an array of outlets, including the MercoPress news agency, Uganda News, EIN NewsDesk, Caribbean Islands Online and AllVoices. The Centre also produced a special feature story on the work of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee.

United Nations website

7. During the reporting period, the Department continued to maintain and update the website on the United Nations and decolonization (http://www.un.org/en/globalissues/decolonization/) in the six official languages. The site had more than a quarter of a million (253,677) page views in all languages, an increase of 46 per cent over the previous year.

8. The website for the International Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories (May 25-31) (http://www.un.org/en/events/nonselfgoverning/index.shtml), also created and maintained by the Department, had an increase of 42 per cent in page views during the same period.

United Nations Television

9. United Nations Television covered live the 23 formal meetings of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee, as well as the adoption of the Committee reports in the Assembly plenary meeting. Coverage of all of these meetings was also made available live and on-demand on UN Webcast.

10. The Department UNifeed operation — the television features stream made available to broadcasters — produced and packaged videos on activities related to decolonization, including the statement of the Secretary-General to the February 2013 session of the Special Committee on Decolonization, and statements and a press conference related to the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) that was held in March 2013.

United Nations Radio

11. United Nations Radio provided coverage in the six official languages and in Portuguese and Kiswahili of the full range of the work of the Organization on decolonization, and reported on appearances before the press by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Argentine Republic and the Permanent Representative of the

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations on the Falklands (Malvinas) issue.

12. United Nations Radio also covered the annual regional seminar of the Decolonization Committee that was held in Quito, from 30 May to 1 June 2012.

United Nations Photo Unit

13. The United Nations Photo Unit covered the meetings of the Special Committee on Decolonization and related press conferences. It continued to digitize and make available legacy photos showing the historical work of the Organization on decolonization.

IV. Visitors Services

14. The topic of decolonization, including the roles of the Trusteeship Council and the Special Committee, was regularly included in the narrative of the guided and audio tours of United Nations Headquarters provided by the Department. Two maps on decolonization, which include facts and figures, assisted the guides in explaining to visitors the historical process of decolonization, as well as the locations of the current Non-Self-Governing Territories. Both the adult and children's versions of the audio tour included information on the topic until 31 December 2012, when audio tour services were discontinued.

V. Dag Hammarskjöld Library

15. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library provides research and information services on decolonization and related issues on an ongoing basis. During the reporting period, the Library handled a number of requests for research and information services on this topic. Requests came from delegates, staff members and scholars, who wished to make effective use of the rich documentary archives of the Organization, including landmark speeches, treaties, maps, Trusteeship Council reports and other relevant information sources.

16. Through its retrospective digitization programme, the Library continued to digitize and post important United Nations documents to the Official Documents System (ODS) to ensure that an increasing number of the records on decolonization were accessible through the Internet, while ensuring the preservation of the original copies. During the reporting period, 80 volumes (16,109 pages) of landmark documentation on decolonization issued for General Assembly sessions from 1949 to 1975 were digitized, thus enabling vastly increased access to this resource. This set of documents includes English, French and Spanish versions of reports of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

VI. United Nations publications

17. During the reporting period, the Department published volume 62 (2008) of the *Yearbook of the United Nations* and continued work on volume 63 (2009). With its comprehensive coverage of the annual activities of the United Nations, including those related to decolonization, the *Yearbook* presents the work of the General Assembly, the Fourth Committee and the Special Committee, as well as general decolonization issues and the support provided by the Economic and Social Council to Non-Self-Governing Territories.

18. The latest edition of the United Nations primer *Basic Facts about the United Nations* appeared in Spanish and several local languages during the reporting period. The book documents the contributions of the United Nations to decolonization up to the present day.

VII. United Nations information centres and services

19. The network of United Nations information centres continued to raise awareness of the issue of decolonization through the dissemination of information materials and promotion of the work of the Fourth Committee, often in local languages, to students, civil society and the media.

20. The United Nations Information Service in Geneva issued press releases on the work of the Human Rights Council and other human rights treaty bodies and experts that touched on the effects of colonization and decolonization in the context of country reviews. Themes related to decolonization were also occasionally addressed during the news briefings of the Service, held twice a week.

21. The work of the United Nations in the area of decolonization was a regular feature in the briefings and guided tour programmes of the United Nations Visitors Services outside Headquarters, primarily in the context of an overview of the history, the main activities and the achievements of the Organization. In Geneva, guided tours of the Palais des Nations, including the new thematic tour on the history of the United Nations, and the information programmes organized for visiting groups addressed the role of the Trusteeship Council in the decolonization process. A total of 100,073 visitors took the guided and thematic tours and 86 information programmes were organized for 2,832 people in 2012. Similarly, all visitors participating in a guided tour and a briefing programme at the United Nations Office in Nairobi were addressed on decolonization-related issues. In 2012, the Visitors Service highlighted the issue to 2,869 visitors who participated in the briefing programmes. The Visitors Service of the United Nations Information Service in Vienna briefed approximately 50,000 visitors in the context of guided tours and about 5,000 who took part in lectures.

22. The issue of decolonization was also the focus of Model United Nations programmes. The United Nations Regional Information Centre in Brussels prepared an information sheet for participants in the Model United Nations of Lübeck, held in Germany from 23 to 28 April 2012. The protection of stateless people and the prevention of statelessness under the Fourth Committee were among the topics discussed.

VIII. Conclusions

23. The Department of Public Information, as the public voice of the Organization, continues to disseminate information about decolonization. Using both traditional and new information and communications technologies, it highlights the need for immediate and full implementation of the 1960 United Nations Declaration on Decolonization. The work of the Special Committee on Decolonization, which is the intergovernmental body devoted to advancing the United Nations decolonization agenda, remains at the centre of the Department outreach activities with media, civil society and educational institutions.